



For Immediate Release
Contact: Peter Roessmann
Phone: (970) 945-8522

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River District Board Reaffirms Support of West Slope Ballot Initiative

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, CO - The Colorado River Water Conservation District Board of Directors reaffirmed its intention to ask voters to freeze the current property tax rate paid to the District at 0.25 mills. The Board reviewed the unanimous decision made at its April board meeting to place a TABOR-compliance question on the November ballot in light of its decision on Tuesday to oppose Referendum A, the controversial statewide \$2 billion water bonding measure.

The River District is asking voters to freeze the TABOR-imposed cap on their revenues which has cut tax rates in half since 1992 and is impairing the District's ability to adequately meet future water West Slope water needs. The River District referendum is not a tax increase. West Slope homeowners currently are only assessed \$4.35 on a \$200,000 home for protecting and developing the Colorado River Basin's water resources for Western Colorado residents.

The Board evaluated the potential for confusion between the two ballot questions on water issues: one a Denver-based statewide question, the other targeted to provide benefits exclusively to the West Slope. The Colorado River District resolved to continue forward with its tax-freeze measure for Western Colorado.

"We have to be like John Elway," said Routt County Director Tom Sharp, "You don't win unless you keep playing the game."

Director Sharp's sentiments were echoed by other Board members, such as Kathy Hall of Mesa County, who expressed confidence that voters would be able to distinguish between the two questions at the polls.

The current drought period continues to place a serious strain on West Slope water resources, threatening to impair the economy of Western Colorado and possibly even limit in-home uses of water. The Colorado River District has already responded to the drought with a series of measures that received overwhelming approval from West Slope residents, including securing unused stored water for water users without adequate supplies, managing demand and stored water supplies to avoid depleting reservoirs and finding solutions to the loss of water from Green Mountain Reservoir. These and other

actions keep citizens in Western Colorado from running out of water in their homes and water-dependent businesses from economic ruin.

The River District plans to use increased revenue collections from the District's "de-Brucing" or TABOR-compliance measure for development of new water resources for West Slope use, water quality improvements and measures to increase the storage in existing Western Colorado reservoirs.

The Colorado River Water Conservation District serves the residents of 15 West Slope counties, including Moffat, Routt, Rio Blanco, Grand, Eagle, Summit, Garfield, Mesa, Gunnison, Pitkin, Delta, Ouray and portions of Montrose, Saguache and Hinsdale counties. The Colorado River District was chartered in 1937 to protect and conserve the waters of the Colorado River Basin for beneficial uses.

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